

3510A, Wapiti River, D.R. 45

7/20/1950, 1000 ft

Sculptors-B
(cast)




Statues of Abraham Lincoln

Wladyslaw Theodore
Benda

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection



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<http://archive.org/details/statuesxxblinc>



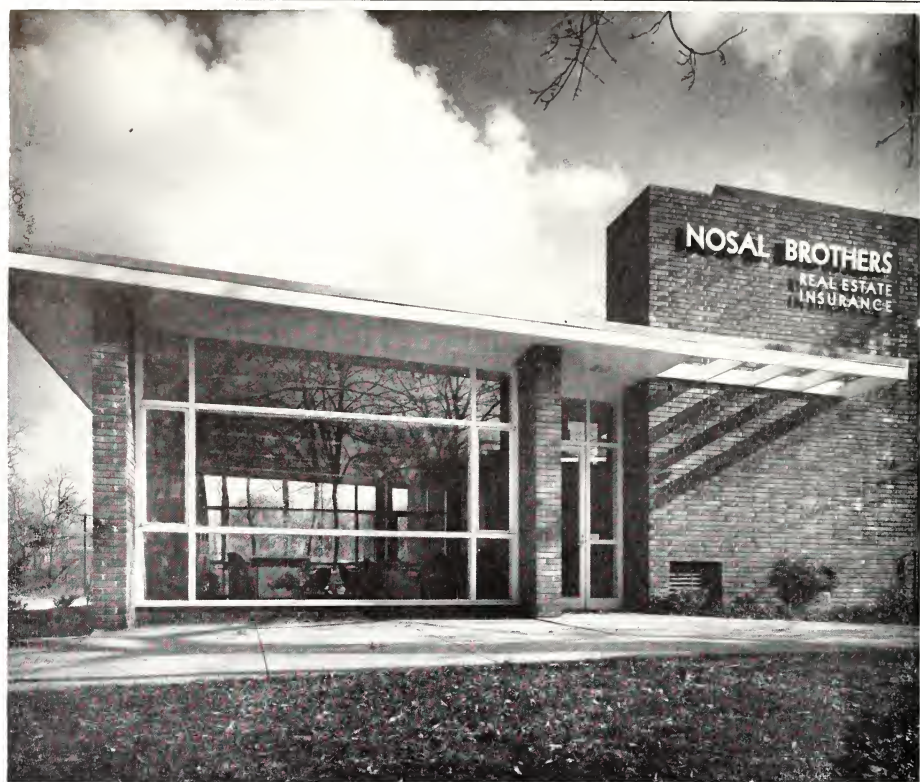
In Commemoration of Polish Participation in the American Civil War.
The Lincoln mask by W. T. Benda. Photomontage by Henry Archacki.

(For story see inside)

The Kosciuszko Foundation

Thirtieth Anniversary Ball

February 1, 1963



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W. T. Benda's first cover design for the Kosciuszko Foundation Ball — "A Night in Old Krakow" — 1937. This photo of the finished design was taken in Benda's studio.

"THE LINCOLN MASK"

BY W. T. BENDA (1873-1948)

Photomontage by Henry Archacki

Since we feature Polish participation in the American Civil War, both in the pageant and in the Souvenir Journal, the Committee thought that such a photomontage as Mr. Archacki submitted would be most appropriate as a cover illustration for this Journal. The Lincoln mask is a symbol of the idealism of Abraham Lincoln; and Tadeusz Kosciuszko, some two generations before Lincoln, foreshadowed the Declaration of Emancipation in his Last Will and Testament—as Mr. Archacki reminds us in another story in this Journal.

There are hundreds of photos and portraits of Abraham Lincoln, but not many of them portray the spirit of the Great Emancipator as well as does the mask created by W. T. (Wladyslaw Teodor) Benda.

The BENDA MASKS are probably the best known and most widely remembered of the artist's many creative endeavors. At the height of his career as an illustrator and magazine cover artist, Benda became interested in masks. In 1914 he attended a masquerade ball. As a part of his costume he made a mask. He became so intrigued with the possibilities that the masks became more than just a hobby. They developed into a serious new art form in the modern world. He became recognized as the world's foremost authority and prepared the article on the subject for the Encyclopedia Britannica. In 1944 he authored and illustrated a book on "Masks," published by Watson-Guptill Publications, Inc.

The artist was born in Poznan, Poland (then under Prussian rule) in 1873, the son of a pianist-composer. After finishing his preparatory studies for a career in engineering there was no opening at the Engineering Institute. While waiting, he attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Kraków. The family later moved to Vienna where Benda continued the study of art. In 1899 his father's sister, actress Helena

Modjeska, invited them to California. Benda carried on his painting studies there until he came to New York in 1903. He attended the Art Students League and also Chase's Art School.

In 1906, while working for the American Lithographic Company, he was given his first chance as an illustrator by Joseph Chapin, Art Editor of Scribner's. He became one of the most popular illustrators of the time and during the following years produced a prolific amount of work for such magazines as *Century*, *Cosmopolitan*, *McClure's*, *Collier's*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Hearst Magazine*, *Women's Home Companion*, *American*, *Liberty*, etc., as well as illustrations for many books. He also did much in the field of decorative arts and was awarded the Silver Medal for his murals at the Pan-American Exposition in San Francisco. During the two World Wars he designed many posters for both Poland and America. He was honored with the "Polonia Restituta" decoration by the Polish Government following World War I.

W. T. Benda was unlimited in the scope of his mask-making. He was constantly experimenting with new types and techniques. His masks were made up of thousands of pieces of glued paper. Some were modeled directly, others were built upon a mold. After the bold imaginative conception for each mask, Benda became a stickler for detail. A mask took many months to complete and was finished with laborious effort to a perfection of the most precise variety.

The uses for the Benda Masks were almost as varied as their sizes and subjects. Some were designed as a type of portrait-sculpture, some for theatrical performances, while others were purely for use as decorative ornaments. The Lincoln mask is, of course, a portrait sculpture.—S.P.M.

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